



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

# **CHCDHA402A Maintain well being in a field environment**

**Release: 1**

## **CHCDHA402A Maintain well being in a field environment**

### **Modification History**

Not Applicable

### **Unit Descriptor**

#### **Descriptor**

This unit of competency describes the skills and knowledge required to work ethically and to maintain and promote personal welfare while under stressful conditions encountered in the field

### **Application of the Unit**

#### **Application**

Maintaining well being in field environments primarily applies in humanitarian work environments and in community development and support work

This unit may be applied in a range of development and/or humanitarian assistance contexts and should reflect the concepts and principles of aid effectiveness (i.e. ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability) as embodied in the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)

These skills and knowledge must be used within the scope of the person's role and authority

### **Licensing/Regulatory Information**

Not Applicable

### **Pre-Requisites**

Not Applicable

## Employability Skills Information

### Employability skills

This unit contains employability skills

## Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements define the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

The Performance Criteria specify the level of performance required to demonstrate achievement of the Element. Terms in italics are elaborated in the Range Statement.

## Elements and Performance Criteria

### ELEMENT

### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

1. Address health issues specific to field work

1.1 Identify *adverse aspects of field living conditions* and make appropriate adjustments to address them

1.2 Identify and *take action to prevent or minimise general health risks* associated with living in a *field environment*

1.3 Identify and *take action to prevent or minimise risks associated with inappropriate use of drugs and alcohol*

1.4 Identify and *take action to prevent or minimise risks associated with unsafe and inappropriate sexual activity*

1.5 Undertake relevant health checks and vaccinations as required in preparation for field work in line with organisation and/or program requirements

1.6 Implement and promote *healthy dietary practices* within the limits imposed by the field environment

1.7 Implement and promote *healthy exercise practices* within the limits imposed by the field environment

1.8 Maintain and promote personal hygiene associated with living in a field environment

**ELEMENT****PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

2. Maintain own psychological health in development and/or humanitarian assistance work
- 2.1 Identify the importance of maintaining own psychological well being
  - 2.2 Recognise and attend to *personal psychological needs*
  - 2.3 Recognise own personal motivation for undertaking work in development and/or humanitarian assistance
  - 2.4 Take appropriate steps to manage disillusionment in a development and/or humanitarian assistance work context
  - 2.5 Identify potential impacts of loss and common features of grief and trauma
  - 2.6 Recognise common *expressions of grief* and develop awareness of own response to grief
3. Address personal security risks in a field environment
- 3.1 Identify and minimise *personal security risks*
  - 3.2 *Take appropriate action to handle* situations of personal risk
  - 3.3 Identify and respond appropriately to *signs of stress*
  - 3.4 Recognise and attend to signs of *traumatic stress* and *post traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD)
  - 3.5 Take *appropriate action to prevent or minimise harmful stress*
  - 3.6 Use *organisation support systems and personnel* appropriately
  - 3.7 Seek and undertake debriefing following all placements through organisation support systems and/or externally

**ELEMENT****PERFORMANCE CRITERIA****4. Manage own security in a field environment**

- 4.1 Develop knowledge of risk assessment and risk minimisation procedures relevant to work being undertaken
- 4.2 Be clear about relevant organisation requirements of the worker in achieving organisation and/or program goals and as a basis for maintaining own boundaries
- 4.3 Comply with security protocols set by the organisation
- 4.4 Work with knowledge of organisation procedures and plans for responding to major incidents and evacuations
- 4.5 Be aware of and use available support mechanisms
- 4.6 Develop and maintain relationships in own living environment to enhance personal well being

**5. Recognise and deal with trauma and vicarious traumatisation**

- 5.1 Recognise vicarious traumatisation in self
- 5.2 Access available support services to assist in dealing with own vicarious traumatisation
- 5.3 Recognise vicarious traumatisation in others and use appropriate strategies to respond to this
- 5.4 Identify the overt and covert signs of trauma in others and any available support framework to address this

**ELEMENT**

6. Contribute to maintaining health and well being of others

**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- 6.1 Use active listening and caring responses to assist in defusing stress in others
- 6.2 Contribute to development and maintenance of support systems with colleagues that support both them and yourself
- 6.3 Develop heightened awareness of indicators of health and well being issues in those participating as in-country partners and collaborators in work in development and humanitarian assistance
- 6.4 Contribute to specific needs of maintaining health and well being of stakeholders with special needs and disadvantages, such as refugees, internally displaced people, children, the elderly, widowed and people with disabilities

## Required Skills and Knowledge

### REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level required for this unit.

#### *Essential knowledge:*

The candidate must be able to demonstrate essential knowledge required to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

This includes:

- General context of relief and development environment
- Relevant organisation and/or project/program structure, including formal lines of reporting and responsibility
- Some knowledge of organisation internal politics and informal influence or power relationships
- Broad knowledge of the effects of drugs and alcohol
- Basic dietary and nutritional information
- Basic psychological principles
- Organisation and/or other available support systems and personnel
- Emergency management concepts, principles and guidelines
- Problem solving and decision making techniques
- Sectoral requirements
- Relevant policies, procedures and guidelines relating to issues such as:
  - staff support
  - employment terms and conditions
  - risk management
  - staff and asset security
  - benchmarks in related areas (e.g. post placement debriefing)
  - cross cultural awareness and sensitivity

#### *Essential skills:*

It is critical that the candidate demonstrate the ability to:

- Effectively maintain personal and psychological health by adjusting to field living conditions, doing healthy dietary and exercise practices and reducing risks associated

## REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

with drug and alcohol use, sexual activity, security and stress

- Recognise and appropriately handle adverse aspects of field living conditions including traumatic or harmful stress and situations of personal security risk
- Effectively communicate with and work safely with others in the work area, and access organisation support systems when necessary
- Comply with relevant organisation policies, procedures and requirements on occupational health and safety (OHS), staff welfare, security and related issues
- Access and address available advice (e.g. from relevant government department) on risk levels
- Register (if appropriate) through embassy/high commission to support personal safety

In addition, the candidate must be able to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

These include the ability to:

- Use appropriate communication and interpersonal techniques with colleagues and others
- Work as part of a team environment to complete tasks
- Identify and clearly define problems and demonstrate appropriate response procedures
- Initiate new ideas or work methodologies
- Accurately plan and organise work activities
- Efficiently manage own responsibilities and timelines for completion of work
- Apply thinking, problem solving and conceptual techniques
- Demonstrate personal management, including initiative, self motivation and direction
- Use emotional and psychological state control
- Undertake self observation and reflection
- Demonstrate awareness of team members' physical, emotional and psychological state
- Work with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Communicate effectively with a range of different audiences
- Use communications equipment, including telephone, radio, satellite phone, fax and email
- Identify and communicate effectively with stakeholders
- Analyse, evaluate and prioritise risks
- Demonstrate adaptability and the ability to deal with ambiguous situations
- Select and use appropriate technology
- Use language, literacy and numeracy skills such as those required to:
  - collect, analyse and organise data
  - communicate in spoken and written form with a range of audiences
  - adjust spoken and written language to suit audience
  - prepare or customise materials
- calculate and estimate times, costs and quantities



## Evidence Guide

### EVIDENCE GUIDE

The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the Performance Criteria, Required Skills and Knowledge, the Range Statement and the Assessment Guidelines for this Training Package.

*Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate this unit of competency:*

- The individual being assessed must provide evidence of specified essential knowledge as well as skills
- The application of competency is to be assessed in the workplace or realistically simulated workplace
- Assessment is to occur under standard and authorised work practices, safety requirements and environmental constraints
- Consistency of performance should be demonstrated over the required range of situations relevant to the workplace

*Access and equity considerations:*

- All workers in development and humanitarian assistance should be aware of access, equity and human rights issues in their own area of work
- All workers should develop their ability to work in a culturally diverse environment
- In particular workers should be aware of cultural, historical and current issues facing the people and culture in which they are working
- Assessors and trainers must take into account relevant access and equity issues relating to the culture in which they are working

## EVIDENCE GUIDE

*Context of and specific resources for assessment:*

- This unit may be assessed independently, however holistic assessment practice with other related units of competency is encouraged
- Assessment of essential underpinning knowledge, other than confirmatory questions, will usually be conducted in an off-site context
- Resources required for assessment include access to:
  - workplace location or simulated workplace
  - specifications and work instructions
  - policy manuals and procedure manuals (international and local, including sector specific manuals)
  - relevant documents (such as staff assessments, memos, leave records and performance reviews)
  - relevant equipment (such as vehicles, office equipment and communications equipment)
  - managers, co-workers and other staff

## EVIDENCE GUIDE

*Method of assessment may include:*

- Assessment needs to take into consideration the practical difficulties associated with attempting on-job assessment in the field
- Given the nature of this unit, candidates should be expected to present evidence from within a real field environment
- If this is not possible, demonstration of some performance criteria in this unit may be achieved through observing the behaviour and responses of the candidate under a stressful situation similar to those likely to be encountered in the field
- While it is unethical and inappropriate to place a candidate in real danger, a life-like simulation may provide the best opportunity to observe 'near-real' responses
- The use of third party and self-reflective evidence for assessing this unit is preferred
- Underpinning knowledge may be assessed through:
  - written assignments
  - project reports
  - debriefings
  - action learning projects
- Assessment should be supported by supplementary evidence from a wide range of sources, preferably including evidence from one or more field situations
- Completed Security and Safety training (e.g. Red-R "Personal Security and Communication" training: <http://www.redr.org.au/training/training-courses/61-personal-security-a-communications>)

## **Range Statement**

### **RANGE STATEMENT**

The Range Statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Add any essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts.

## RANGE STATEMENT

- *Adverse aspects of field living conditions may include:*
  - Climate
  - Communication difficulties associated with language barriers
  - Compound living
  - Crowded conditions
  - Difficulties associated with cultural differences
  - Difficulties associated with the reality of poverty in the community
  - Exposure to stressful situations (e.g. human and animal distress and death, and destruction of property)
  - Government or internal organisation bureaucracy challenges
  - Isolation
  - Lack of availability of dietary preference (e.g. vegetarian workers in pastoral community may need to eat meat as their main diet)
  - Lack of communication infrastructure (e.g. telephone and internet)
  - Lack of control over dietary practices and intake, including frequency or variety in food
  - Lack of personal security
  - Lack of privacy
  - Lack of recreational opportunities or free time
  - Lack of security of belongings
  - Limited access to safe transport
  - Long working hours
  - Poor access to fresh and/or hot water, including opportunities to bathe or wash clothing
  - Poor communications infrastructure resulting in lack of contact with support networks
  - Poor general infrastructure (e.g. roads, electricity and fuel)
  - Poor standard of accommodation
  - Possible personal injury through disease or violence
  
- *Take action to prevent or minimise various risks may include:*
  - Actions and strategies required or recommended by specific organisation, program and/or community contacts

**RANGE STATEMENT**

*General health risks within the field environment may include:*

- Cholera
- Dehydration
- Dengue fever
- Heat stroke
- Hepatitis
- HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases (STDs)
- Lack of sleep
- Malaria
- Other diseases or conditions that may pose a health risk at a specific time in a specific location
- Poor food and water quality

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Field environment may include:*

- Conditions which are encountered while living and working in a development and/or humanitarian assistance context, which may be:
  - away from a permanent base
  - relatively permanent for those working in a development context for years at a time
- Field conditions vary depending upon the infrastructure available
- In some cases, field conditions may be relatively comfortable, but field conditions to which this unit refers commonly involve adverse conditions
- The most severe sets of field conditions are likely to occur during complex humanitarian emergencies (CHE), which:
  - is characterised by large-scale deterioration in the economic, political and/or social spheres
  - may be the direct result of serious problems in only one sphere, but most often is the result of a combination of factors working together to create problems in more than one area
  - may be caused by major natural or man-made disasters and usually affect a population of more than 50,000 people
  - may be slow or sudden in their onset
  - may be declared when two of the following pre-conditions exist:
    - large scale displacement of population
    - breakdown in economic system
    - breakdown in civil order
    - famine preconditions

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Inappropriate use of drug and alcohol may include:*

- Any use of drugs or alcohol in certain cultural and legal circumstances
- Drunkenness
- Alcoholism
- Operating in work role while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Use of stimulants to extend working hours or energy levels
- Use of drugs or alcohol as a field environment coping mechanism
- In some cultural circumstances, consumption of alcohol or other drugs such as kava or betel-nut may be a major aspect of social interaction, and abstinence from alcohol may reflect negatively on the individual, the organisation and staff

*Risks associated with inappropriate use of drug and alcohol may include:*

- Cultural offence
- Prohibition of alcohol within certain countries
- Severity of sentencing laws in relation to drug and alcohol offences in certain countries
- Breach of contract of employment and lack of organisation's legal liability protection
- Damage to own physical health
- Inability to operate effectively while influenced by drugs or alcohol
- Damage to own reputation and freedom to operate
- Damage to organisation's reputation and freedom to operate

*Unsafe and inappropriate sexual activity may include:*

- Unprotected sex
- Sex with target group e.g. refugees
- Sex with co-workers



## RANGE STATEMENT

*Risks associated with unsafe or inappropriate sexual activity may include:*

- Sexually transmitted diseases (e.g. HIV/AIDS, gonorrhoea and syphilis)
- Pregnancy
- Cultural offence
- Legal sanctions
- Damage to own reputation and freedom to operate
- Damage to organisation's reputation and freedom to operate

*Healthy dietary practices may include:*

- Eating regularly and attempting to achieve a balanced diet
- Maintaining adequate level of calorie intake
- Maximising variety of food eaten
- Maximising intake of fresh fruits and vegetables

*Healthy exercise practices refer to:*

- Physical activities that help maintain fitness, build endurance, strengthen and maintain tone of muscles for example, stretching, walking, running and swimming

*Personal psychological needs refer to:*

- Those particular needs which are characteristic of the individual
- They will vary from person to person, but each individual should be able to describe their own key needs, which might include:
  - daily time alone
  - social interaction with others
  - opportunity to laugh
  - maintaining a routine
  - maintaining regular contact with personal support network, such as:
    - family
    - friends
    - work colleagues
    - religious organisation
    - sporting or common interest groups

## RANGE STATEMENT

- Expressions of grief may include:*
- Anger
  - Anxiety
  - Change in worldview
  - Chronic sorrow
  - Confusion
  - Depression
  - Despair
  - Drop in self-esteem
  - Fear of going mad
  - Feeling unable to cope
  - Guilt and remorse
  - Helplessness
  - Hopelessness
  - Loneliness
  - Questioning of values and beliefs
  - Relief
  - Shock and disbelief
  - Suicidal ideation

- Personal security risks may include risk of:*
- Assault
  - Mugging
  - Kidnap or being held hostage
  - Landmines
  - Bombs
  - Vehicle accidents
  - Issues that may lead to evacuations - including threat of fire, volcano, flood, earthquake, war and civil unrest

- Appropriate action to handle situations of risk may include:*
- Building rapport
  - Defusing risky situations
  - Evasive action
  - Disarming techniques
  - Maintaining appropriate physiology

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Signs of stress may include:*

- Physical symptoms such as:
  - gastrointestinal:
  - dry mouth
  - impression of having one's heart in one's mouth
  - nausea
  - vomiting
  - sensation of bloating
  - heartburn
  - abdominal pain
  - appetite changes
  - diarrhoea
  - constipation
  - cardiovascular:
  - elevated blood pressure
  - rapid heart beat
  - hot flushes
  - cold hands and feet
  - sweating
  - respiratory:
  - breathlessness
  - panting
  - sensation of not being able to breathe
  - musculoskeletal:
  - cramps
  - back pain
  - trembling
  - nervous ticks
  - grimacing
  - neurological - headache

*continued ...*

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Signs of stress may include (contd):*

- Psychological symptoms such as:
  - emotional:
    - anxiety
    - anguish
  - behavioural:
    - sleep problems
    - abuse of cigarettes, alcohol or drugs
    - modification of one's libido
  - intellectual:
    - concentration difficulties
    - memory difficulties
    - problems with reasoning and verbal expression

*[Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies, 2nd Ed. p. 321]*

- Signs of acute stress may include:
  - paranoia
  - depression
  - emotional numbing
  - hyperactivity
  - exaggerated humour
  - poor anger management
  - mood swings
  - pronounced memory difficulties
  - inappropriate risk taking
  - inability to undertake routine duties

*Traumatic stress:*

- Is brought on by critical incidents, especially those which are unexpected and emotionally powerful
- Responses to traumatic stress are similar to those above for stress, but may be more pronounced (e.g. vomiting instead of nausea)

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):*

- Is a clinical diagnosis which should be made by a qualified psychologist or psychiatrist
- Signs of PTSD include:
  - invasive memories (flashback), nightmares and sleep disturbance
  - repeated reliving of the event
  - detachment
  - avoidance of trigger persons or situations
  - hyper-arousal
  - anxiety
  - depression
  - grief
  - anger
  - suicidal thoughts
  - reactions intensifying over time
  - clear alteration of personality
  - withdrawal from others
  - continued rumination about the event
  - constant expectation of a new disaster
  - persistent sleep difficulties
  - phobia formation
  - reactions continuing for 3 - 4 weeks

*[Source UNHCR Handbook for emergencies, symptoms based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, version Four (DSM-IV)]*

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Appropriate action to prevent or minimise harmful stress may include:*

- Understanding that:
  - reactions to stress are normal
  - responses to critical incidents are sometimes delayed
  - cumulative (or chronic) stress builds up over time
  - those experiencing stress are not the best judges of their own ability to cope
- Gathering information on local conditions (language, culture) prior to arrival
- Getting enough sleep
- Eating regularly
- Controlling intake of alcohol, tobacco, medicines and/or drugs
- Taking time for rest and relaxation and for physical exercise (20 minutes per day)
- Giving expression to stress through:
  - conversation
  - counselling
  - diary-keeping
  - artistic expression
- Critical incident defusing or debriefing sessions

*Critical incidents in the field may include but are not limited to:*

- Being a powerless witness of violence
- Being a victim of violence, sexual assault and/or bullying
- Death or injury of a colleague
- Deaths of children
- Hostage taking
- Personal injury
- Seeing or being associated with a tragic event accompanied by intense media coverage (especially if media coverage is inaccurate or misleading)
- Undergoing great personal risk

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Organisation support systems and personnel may include:*

- Work colleague networks
- Communication with personal support networks from the field
- Regular mail from home
- Regular news and information from home (e.g. newspapers and magazines)
- Human resources staff
- Religious leaders and/or lay workers
- Regular 'Rest and Recreation' opportunities
- Debriefing after every field placement
- Access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) for rape treatment, if not provided by own agency, then link with the nearest United Nation office.

See detail at:

<http://unworkplace.unaids.org/UNAIDS/basics/post-exposure-treatment.shtml>

## Unit Sector(s)

Not Applicable